

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method for enhancing the functionality of an electronic message,
2 comprising the steps of:
3 receiving the electronic message;
4 obtaining a command instruction from the electronic message; and
5 performing a function responsive to the step of obtaining.

1 2. The method of claim 1,
2 wherein the command instruction indicates an application provider for
3 performing the function.

1 3. The method of claim 1,
2 wherein the command instruction is a Uniform Resource Locator ("URL").

1 4. The method of claim 1,
2 wherein the step of performing a function includes the steps of:
3 determining an application provider from the command instruction;
4 and
5 sending a Request to the application provider to perform the
6 function.

1 5. The method of claim 4, including the step of:

1 6. The method of claim 4, further including the steps of:
2 receiving a Response from the application provider; and
3 modifying the message responsive to receiving the Response.

1 8. The method of claim 1,
2 wherein the command instruction includes:
3 a host and a file which indicate an application provider for
4 performing the function; and
5 at least one parameter which indicates information to be delivered
6 to the application provider.

1 9. The method of claim 1,
2 wherein the command instruction is included in the received message as an
3 Internet shortcut file.

1 10. The method of claim 4,
2 wherein the Request is sent using an HTTP POST command.

1 14. An article of manufacture wherein information is stored for programming
2 a computer as in claim 11,
3 wherein the message includes a return address, and wherein the computer
4 is programmed to modify the return address to identify a computing device which
5 will perform a function responsive to a returned message.

1 15. An article of manufacture wherein information is stored for programming
2 a computer as in claim 13,
3 wherein the command instruction includes:
4 a host and file which indicate the application provider for
5 performing the function; and
6 at least one parameter, and at least one associated value which
7 indicates information to be delivered to the application provider.

1 16. An article of manufacture wherein information is stored for programming
2 a computer as in claim 11,
3 wherein a command instruction is included in the electronic message as an
4 Internet shortcut file.

1 17. An apparatus for providing a function responsive to receiving a Request,
2 comprising:
3 a processor; and
4 a processor readable storage medium in communication with the processor,
5 containing processor readable program code for programming the apparatus to:
6 receive the Request;
7 perform a function responsive to an instruction included in the
8 Request; and,
9 prepare a Response subsequent to performing the function.

- Docket No.: D/A1053
lharris/xerx/1051/1051.001